



Commonwealth of Virginia

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Joint Board Matter

Chairman Jeff McKay, Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Supervisor Dalia

Palchik

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Mr. Chairman – As you and many others on this Board know, a parent’s top priority is to ensure their children are healthy and safe. Too often parents in our community have their worst fears realized when a doctor tells them their child has cancer. As troubling for the parents as this is, we can only imagine how their child feels as they navigate such a difficult experience.

Today, I want to focus on the importance of childhood cancer awareness. In 2023, an estimated 15,000 children below the age of 19 will be diagnosed with cancer in the U.S. The rate of cancer in children

has increased steadily since the 1970's, and although mortality rates have greatly improved, serious side effects and complications continue to be an issue for a vast majority of patients well into adulthood.

Childhood cancer is the leading cause of childhood mortality by disease, killing 1 in 10 children who are diagnosed, and yet only 4-8% of federal cancer research funding goes to studying childhood cancers. Evidently, there is an ongoing need for further education about the impact of childhood cancer.

Spreading awareness about childhood cancer can promote additional dedicated funding for research and development of new treatments so that we can save children's lives. To advocate for our children is to advocate for our future. Our children are the leaders of tomorrow, and acknowledging and uplifting their struggles gives them a voice. As a community and as a Board, it is our duty to be a source of comfort and support to our kids, especially for those experiencing cancer.

I, along with Chairman McKay and Supervisor Palchik, move that the Board direct the County Executive to assign the Office of Public Affairs

to prepare a proclamation to officially establish September as “Childhood Cancer Awareness Month” in Fairfax County to coincide with the already established National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. I also move that the Board direct the County Executive to assign the appropriate staff to create a childhood cancer awareness campaign for the month of September and the creation of a County webpage dedicated to information, services and resources on childhood cancer within Fairfax County.